Visionary Leadership
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Visionary Leadership

Introduction

Many have argued that insufficient resources have been devoted to the development of the public health workforce, including its leaders. Leadership development for public health officials is important for several reasons:

1) Public health leaders often lack formal academic preparation to deal with management and leadership challenges.
2) Demographics trends, along with reduced resources and the lack of organizational succession plans, have increased the needs for new skills for our leaders.
3) Complex issues and problems confronting the public health system have increased the need for strong communication, collaboration, team building, and planning skills by public health leaders. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

This section provides information on some of the efforts to identify public health leadership competencies, some of the training and education available to public health leaders, and other strategies to support leadership development.

Leadership Competencies

There are many ways to describe and sort the competencies and skills that it takes to lead, and there are many frameworks for thinking about leadership. Some of these are specific to public health. There is also much in the literature about various leadership styles and about situations calling for different types of leadership. In the public health field, recent attention has been on collaborative leadership and crisis leadership, or leadership during crisis events or public health emergencies.

Public Health Leadership Competency Framework
The National Public Health Leadership Network has developed a competency framework for public health leaders. This framework is being refined, but provides good information about competencies perceived by public health leaders as important.

> ✓ Information about the Public Health Competency Framework is available online at http://www.slu.edu/organizations/nln/competency_framework.html

Collaborative Leadership
The Turning Point National Excellence Collaborative has focused on the skills and capacities needed for collaborative leadership.

The Collaborative has identified six elements as keys to the collaborative process:

1) <u>Assessing the Environment for Collaboration</u>: Understanding the context for change before you act.
2) <u>Creating Clarity – Visioning & Mobilizing</u>: Defining shared values and engaging people in positive action.

3) <u>Building Trust & Creating Safety</u>: Creating safe places for developing shared purpose and action.
4) <u>Sharing Power and Influence</u>: Developing the synergy of people, organizations, and communities to accomplish goals.
5) <u>Developing People – Mentoring and Coaching</u>: Committing to bringing out the best in others and realizing people are your key asset.
6) <u>Self-Reflection – Personal CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement</u>): Being aware of and understanding your values, attitudes, and behaviors as they relate to your own leadership style and its impact on others.

Each of these elements is key to the collaborative process. They are not mutually exclusive but support each other and provide a comprehensive picture of the essential skills of a collaborative leader. *(Collaborative Leadership, Turning Point National Excellence Collaborative)*

✓ More information about Collaborative Leadership, and resources and tools for developing collaborative leadership skills can be accessed through the Turning Point website at http://www.collaborativeleadership.org/

Crisis Leadership
Leadership of a crisis situation includes general leadership principles, but requires application of those principles within the possible unique and extreme circumstances associated with a crisis situation, such as:
- Limited information
- Possible chaos and confusion
- Condensed timeframes
- Higher level risks and consequences
- Rapidly changing circumstances

Crisis leadership competencies are important for public health leaders in public health emergency preparedness and response. Several resources in the Learning Resource Toolkit address crisis leadership and competencies for public health leaders related to emergency preparedness and response.

Leadership Development

Opportunities for Leadership Development
There are a number of formal and informal opportunities for leadership development, ranging from self-study to mentoring relationships to Public Health Leadership Institutes. Some of these are described below:

Public Health Leadership Institutes/Organizations
- <u>The Northwest Public Health Leadership Institute (NWPHLI</u>) offers a year–long experience to increase participants' collaborative leadership skills through on-site and distance learning opportunities guided by practice-based faculty. Scholars from diverse backgrounds (e.g., government public health, community health centers, community hospitals, community-based organizations, social services agencies, justice and law enforcement agencies) work together to develop collaborative leadership skills to apply personally, in their organizations, and in their communities

with a goal of creating integrated and innovative approaches to fostering healthy communities.

- ✓ More information about NWPHLI is available online at http://healthlinks.washington.edu/nwcphp/nwphli/

- The National Public Health Leadership Institute (NPHLI) is a 12-month leadership development program funded by CDC to strengthen the leadership competencies of senior public health officials and to build inter-organizational teams so that community health status improves. Applicants must apply as teams of 2-4 senior level public health professionals who are peers from one organization or several collaborating organizations. The program uses a combination of distance learning and an intensive one-week on-site program in North Carolina.

  - ✓ More information about the NPHLI is available online at www.nphli.org

- The Public Health Leadership Society (PHLS) is a membership organization comprised of the alumni from the following leadership programs for senior public health professionals:
  - National Public Health Leadership Institute
  - State and Regional Public Health Leadership Institutes
  - RWJ State Health Leadership Initiative

  PHLS provides an opportunity for alumni to continue their learning experiences and leadership development, maintain and develop professional and personal relations, and contribute to innovative thinking about public health issues. Members of PHLS collaborate with other national public health organizations to shape the future of public health.

  - ✓ More information about PHLS is available online at http://www.phls.org/default.htm

- The Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program offers leadership development for nurses who have senior executive roles in health services, public health, and nursing education and who aspire to help shape the U.S. health care system of the future. The three-year fellowships offer participants the experiences, insights, competencies, and skills necessary for executive leadership positions in a health care system undergoing unprecedented change.

  - ✓ More information about the Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellows Program is available online at http://www.futurehealth.ucsf.edu/rwj.html

Other Resources and Strategies

While participating in formal public health leadership institutes is an excellent strategy for leadership development, not all public health leaders have the opportunity to do so. Giving priority to their own continuous learning and development is a hallmark of successful leaders, and there are many resources and strategies for self-directed learning and development. Some of these are listed below.

1) Conduct a self-assessment.
   Assess yourself against leadership competency sets and identify areas needing further development. Use opportunities to capitalize on your strengths.

2) Use Full circle, or 360-degree feedback tools.
   Full circle, 360-degree feedback and multi-rater assessment are some of the terms that describe the process in which you evaluate yourself on a set of criteria; your manager evaluates you, as do your peers and direct reports. The confidential and aggregated responses of raters are compared to your own self-assessment to highlights strengths and developmental needs. Many of these tools are available online, and one specific for public health leaders is included in the Learning Resource Toolkit.

3) Seek direct feedback from peers and co-workers.
   Peers and co-workers can provide a more objective perspective on your strengths and weaknesses, and seeking their input provides the additional benefit of fostering an environment with an emphasis on constructive communication and continuous learning and development.

4) Engage in self-reflection.
   Reflect on the results of your self-assessment and any feedback you receive from others. Integrate the information and use it to create a plan, modify behaviors, etc.

5) Develop a learning and development plan for yourself and dedicate time to follow it.

6) Participate in the Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO).
   WSALPHO provides opportunities for networking with peers who are in leadership positions in public health agencies across the state. WSALPHO takes a leadership role in many issues of concern to local public health departments. In addition, serving as an officer or on a committee in WSALPHO or one of its forums provides additional learning opportunities.

7) Participate in a mentoring relationship. Peer mentoring is offered as a part of this orientation. Take advantage of this opportunity and seek out other mentoring relationships.

8) Explore and utilize the resources in the Learning Resource Toolkit for this orientation.